



 **Birds of
Pheasant Branch
Conservancy**

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*Cover photo: Black-crowned night heron by Michael A. McDowell. Used with permission.
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Discovering Pheasant Branch Conservancy

Pheasant Branch Conservancy, a regionally significant natural area, is located on the northwest side of Lake Mendota in central Dane County. Pheasant Branch Creek, a Lake Mendota tributary, meanders through the conservancy, which contains a marsh with open water, natural springs and seeps, prairies, old fields, lowland forests, and wooded hills. These habitats support a wide variety of plants and animals, including rare, threatened, and endangered species. Although surrounded on three sides by urban development, this easily accessible 500+ acre conservancy provides a quiet refuge for bird-watchers, hikers, and other nature enthusiasts.

The Dane County Parks Department owns the northern portion of the conservancy. The city of Middleton's Public Lands Department owns the southern portion, including a corridor that extends along Pheasant Branch Creek's South Branch. The city and county cooperatively manage the conservancy as a single ecological and recreational unit.





Using this Checklist

The following checklist includes all bird species that we have observed in Pheasant Branch Conservancy. We present the checklist in calendar format, with check marks (x) indicating the months that each bird is most likely to be observed. The presence or absence of a check mark, however, does not indicate the abundance or probability of seeing a particular species in the conservancy. For example, while we collectively have spent hundreds of hours in the conservancy over the past 10 years, we only recently (2004) noted the Tufted Titmouse there, even though numerous other birders had seen it previously. Some birds, like the raucous American Crow and the colorful Northern Cardinal, are relatively conspicuous and observed easily, while others, like the nocturnal Whip-poor-will and the inconspicuous Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, can be secretive and only observed rarely.

Some birds, like the Hairy Woodpecker, live in the conservancy year-round or visit it frequently. Others, like the White-crowned Sparrow, only occasionally pass through Pheasant Branch. We identify migrant birds—those that do not breed in Wisconsin, but which observers see during spring or autumn migration periods or during the winter when northern birds move south—with the symbol **M**. Species without the **M** can be considered Wisconsin breeding birds. We have not, however, documented breeding activity in Pheasant Branch Conservancy by all of the birds observed there. In addition, bird populations fluctuate, with some species being abundant one season or year, but not in others. We indicate “rare” species—those reported from Wisconsin eight or fewer times annually—with the symbol **R**.

We use symbols to indicate the status of species of special conservation interest:

SE **state endangered** - under state law, “any species whose continued existence as a viable component of this state’s wild animals or wild plants is determined by the Wisconsin DNR to be in jeopardy on the basis of scientific evidence” (§ 29.604(2)(a), *Wis. Stats.*).

ST **state threatened** - under state law, “any species of wild animals or wild plants which appears likely, within the foreseeable future, on the basis of scientific evidence to become endangered” (§ 29.604(2)(b), *Wis. Stats.*).



SC **state special concern** – those species about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven. The main purpose of this category is to focus attention on certain species before they become threatened or endangered.

INT **introduced** – nonindigenous/nonnative species introduced, either intentionally or unintentionally, into an area (in this case Wisconsin) that is not part of its natural range.

American Bird Conservancy (www.abcbirds.org) and Partners in Flight (www.abcbirds.org/pif/) have compiled a list of U.S. bird species of conservation concern. This “watch list” includes 168 birds, approximately one-fifth of all the birds in the United States. Populations of some species are declining, with continued threats perceived. Others may be stable, but their small population size or limited range indicates a need to at least keep an eye on their status. At least 16 species included on the watch list occur in Pheasant Branch Conservancy. One of these, the Golden-winged Warbler, is considered of “highest concern” and two others, the Solitary Sandpiper and American Woodcock, are considered “high concern” species. The symbol **WL** indicates these watch list species in our checklist.

The large number of bird species (191 of the 408 documented from Wisconsin) and the relatively large number of rare and declining species that occur in Pheasant Branch Conservancy point to the significance of this property for bird conservation and recreation. The Conservancy’s location within urban and urbanizing Dane County, where many native wildlife habitats continue to be degraded, lost, or fragmented, underscores the importance of the continued protection and wise management of this area. We hope that publication of this checklist will help awaken and foster public interest in such activities, because as human populations and development increase, Pheasant Branch Conservancy can only become more crucial for ensuring that local and regional biological diversity is maintained.

Because knowledge of Pheasant Branch Conservancy’s fauna is always changing and additional species continue to be added to the list of the area’s fauna, our checklist must be considered provisional. Your observations and discoveries can help fill in the gaps. To assist you, we’ve included blank lines within the checklist in places where we suspect additional species will be reported eventually. You can report new observations to the nonprofit organization Friends of Pheasant Branch (www.pheasantbranch.org) or the authors.



Summary of Birds Observed in Pheasant Branch Conservancy

Category	Number of Species
Species observed	191
Wisconsin breeding birds observed	168
M Wisconsin migrants observed	23
Year-round Conservancy residents observed	37
Native Wisconsin species observed	186
INT Introduced species observed	5
SE State endangered species observed	2
ST State threatened species observed	2
SC State special concern species observed	26
R Rare Wisconsin birds observed	4
WL American Bird Conservancy watch list species observed	16



Short-eared owl.

DNR ARCHIVES

Checklist of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Birds

SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
GREBES												
Horned Grebe <i>(Podiceps auritus)</i>			X	X	X				X	X		
Pied-billed Grebe <i>(Podilymbus podiceps)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
CORMORANTS												
Double-crested Cormorant <i>(Phalacrocorax auritus)</i>					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
HERONS, BITTERNs, AND ALLIES												
Great Egret <i>(Ardea alba)</i> ST						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Great Blue Heron <i>(Ardea herodias)</i> SC		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
American Bittern <i>(Botaurus lentiginosus)</i> SC			X	X					X			
Cattle Egret <i>(Bulbulcus ibis)</i> SC			X	X								
Green Heron <i>(Butorides virescens)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Least Bittern <i>(Ixobrychus exilis)</i> SC					X	X	X	X	X			
Black-crowned Night Heron <i>(Nycticorax nycticorax)</i> SC			X					X	X			
NEW WORLD VULTURES												
Turkey Vulture <i>(Cathartes aura)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS												
Wood Duck (<i>Aix sponsa</i>)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	
American Wigeon (<i>Anas americana</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	
Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)			X	X	X				X	X		
Green-winged Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue-winged Teal (<i>Anas discors</i>)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Black Duck (<i>Anas rubripes</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesser Scaup (<i>Aythya affinis</i>)			X	X	X					X	X	
Redhead (<i>Aythya americana</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	
Ring-necked Duck (<i>Aythya collaris</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	
Canvasback (<i>Aythya valisineria</i>)			X	X	X					X	X	
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cackling Goose (<i>Branta hutchinsii</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bufflehead (<i>Bucephala albeola</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	
Common Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)	X	X	X	X							X	X
Hooded Merganser (<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Common Merganser (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X
Ruddy Duck (<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>)			X	X	X				X	X	X	X



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ HAWKS, EAGLES, AND ALLIES												
Cooper's Hawk <i>(Accipiter cooperii)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sharp-shinned Hawk <i>(Accipiter striatus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Red-tailed Hawk <i>(Buteo jamaicensis)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rough-legged Hawk <i>(Buteo lagopus)</i>												
Broad-winged Hawk <i>(Buteo platypterus)</i>												
Northern Harrier <i>(Circus cyaneus)</i>												
Bald Eagle <i>(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)</i>												
▶ FALCONS												
American Kestrel <i>(Falco sparverius)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ PARTRIDGES, GROUSE, TURKEYS, AND QUAIL												
Wild Turkey <i>(Meleagris gallopavo)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ring-necked Pheasant <i>(Phasianus colchicus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS												
American Coot <i>(Fulica americana)</i>												
Sora <i>(Porzana carolina)</i>												
Virginia Rail <i>(Rallus limicola)</i>												
▶ CRANES												
Sandhill Crane <i>(Grus canadensis)</i>												



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ PLOVERS												
Semipalmated Plover <i>(Charadrius semipalmatus)</i>								X			X	
Killdeer <i>(Charadrius vociferus)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
▶ SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, AND ALLIES												
Spotted Sandpiper <i>(Actitis macularia)</i>					X	X	X	X	X	X		
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>(Calidris melanotos)</i>					X	X			X	X	X	
Least Sandpiper <i>(Calidris minutilla)</i>					X	X			X	X		
Semipalmated Sandpiper <i>(Calidris pusilla)</i>						X			X	X		
Wilson's Snipe <i>(Gallinago gallinago)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Woodcock <i>(Scolopax minor)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesser Yellowlegs <i>(Tringa flavipes)</i>												
Greater Yellowlegs <i>(Tringa melanoleuca)</i>					X	X			X	X	X	
Solitary Sandpiper <i>(Tringa solitaria)</i>					X	X			X	X	X	
▶ GULLS, TERNS, AND ALLIES												
Herring Gull <i>(Larus argentatus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ring-billed Gull <i>(Larus delawarensis)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ PIGEONS AND DOVES												
Rock Pigeon <i>(Columba livia)</i>												
Mourning Dove <i>(Zenaida macroura)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ CUCKOOS AND ALLIES												
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>(Coccyzus americanus)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Black-billed Cuckoo <i>(Coccyzus erythrophthalmus)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
▶ TYPICAL OWLS												
Short-eared Owl <i>(Asio flammeus)</i>						X	X					
Great Horned Owl <i>(Bubo virginianus)</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eastern Screech-Owl <i>(Otus asio)</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barred Owl <i>(Strix varia)</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ GOATSUCKERS												
Whip-poor-will <i>(Caprimulgus vociferus)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
Common Nighthawk <i>(Chordeiles minor)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
▶ SWIFTS												
Chimney Swift <i>(Chaetura pelagica)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
▶ HUMMINGBIRDS												
Ruby-throated Hummingbird <i>(Archilochus colubris)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
▶ KINGFISHERS												
Belted Kingfisher <i>(Ceryle alcyon)</i>								X	X	X	X	X





SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ WOODPECKERS AND ALLIES												
Northern Flicker <i>(Colaptes auratus)</i>				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Red-bellied Woodpecker <i>(Melanerpes carolinus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Red-headed Woodpecker <i>(Melanerpes erythrocephalus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Downy Woodpecker <i>(Picoides pubescens)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hairy Woodpecker <i>(Picoides villosus)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker <i>(Sphyrapicus varius)</i>					X	X			X	X		
<hr/>												
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▶ TYRANT FLYCATCHERS												
Olive-sided Flycatcher <i>(Contopus cooperi)</i>						X	X		X	X		
Eastern Wood-Pewee <i>(Contopus virens)</i>					X	X	X	X	X			
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher <i>(Empidonax flaviventris)</i>					X	X		X	X			
Least Flycatcher <i>(Empidonax minimus)</i>					X	X		X	X			
Willow Flycatcher <i>(Empidonax traillii)</i>					X	X	X	X				
Great Crested Flycatcher <i>(Myiarchus crinitus)</i>					X	X	X	X	X			
Eastern Phoebe <i>(Sayornis phoebe)</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Eastern Kingbird <i>(Tyrannus tyrannus)</i>					X	X	X	X	X			
<hr/>												
<hr/>												
▶ SHRIKES												
Northern Shrike <i>(Lanius excubitor)</i>											X	X
<hr/>												
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SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ VIREOS												
Yellow-throated Vireo (<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>)						X	X	X	X	X		
Warbling Vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>)					X	X	X	X	X			
White-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo griseus</i>)						X				X		
Red-eyed Vireo (<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)						X	X	X	X	X		
Philadelphia Vireo (<i>Vireo philadelphicus</i>)						X				X		
Blue-headed Vireo (<i>Vireo solitarius</i>)					X	X				X	X	
▶ JAYS AND CROWS												
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blue Jay (<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ LARKS												
Horned Lark (<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ SWALLOWS												
Barn Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>)						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Tree Swallow (<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>)						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ CHICKADEES AND TITMICE												
Tufted Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Black-capped Chickadee (<i>Poecile atricapilla</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ NUTHATCHES												
Red-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta canadensis</i>)	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X
White-breasted Nuthatch (<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ CREEPERS												
Brown Creeper <i>(Certhia americana)</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ WRENS												
Marsh Wren <i>(Cistothorus palustris)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Sedge Wren <i>(Cistothorus platensis)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Carolina Wren <i>(Thryothorus ludovicianus)</i>												
House Wren <i>(Troglodytes aedon)</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Winter Wren <i>(Troglodytes troglodytes)</i>						X	X				X	X
▶ KINGLETS												
Ruby-crowned Kinglet <i>(Regulus calendula)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Golden-crowned Kinglet <i>(Regulus satrapa)</i>						X	X	X	X			
▶ OLD WORLD WARBLERS AND GNATCATCHERS												
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>(Poliophtila caerulea)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
▶ THRUSHES												
Veery <i>(Catharus fuscescens)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
Hermit Thrush <i>(Catharus guttatus)</i>								X	X			X
Wood Thrush <i>(Catharus minimus)</i>												
Swainson's Thrush <i>(Catharus ustulatus)</i>												
Gray Cheek Thrush <i>(Hylocichla mustelina)</i>												
Varied Thrush <i>(Ixoreus naevius)</i>												
Eastern Bluebird <i>(Sialia sialis)</i>								X	X	X	X	X
American Robin <i>(Turdus migratorius)</i>								X	X	X	X	X



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS												
Gray Catbird <i>(Dumetella carolinensis)</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Brown Thrasher <i>(Toxostoma rufum)</i>				X	X	X	X	X	X			
▶ STARLINGS												
European Starling <i>(Sturnus vulgaris)</i>	INT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ WAXWINGS												
Cedar Waxwing <i>(Bombycilla cedrorum)</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
▶ WOOD-WARBLEERS												
Black-throated Blue Warbler <i>(Dendroica caerulescens)</i>	SC					X			X			
Bay-breasted Warbler <i>(Dendroica castanea)</i>	M WL					X				X		
Cerulean Warbler <i>(Dendroica cerulea)</i>	ST WL					X						
Yellow-rumped Warbler <i>(Dendroica coronata)</i>					X	X			X	X		
Yellow-throated Warbler <i>(Dendroica dominica)</i>	SE					X						
Blackburnian Warbler <i>(Dendroica fusca)</i>						X				X		
Magnolia Warbler <i>(Dendroica magnolia)</i>						X				X		
Palm Warbler <i>(Dendroica palmarum)</i>						X				X	X	
Chestnut-sided Warbler <i>(Dendroica pensylvanica)</i>						X			X	X		
Yellow Warbler <i>(Dendroica petechia)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Pine Warbler <i>(Dendroica pinus)</i>					X	X	X			X	X	
Blackpoll Warbler <i>(Dendroica striata)</i>	M					X				X		
Cape May Warbler <i>(Dendroica tigrina)</i>	SC					X				X		
Black-throated Green Warbler <i>(Dendroica virens)</i>						X	X			X		
Common Yellowthroat <i>(Geothlypis trichas)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
(Wood-Warblers continued on next page.)												



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ WOOD-WARBLERS (continued)												
Worm-eating Warbler <i>(Helmitheros vermivorus)</i>						X						
Black-and-white Warbler <i>(Mniotilta varia)</i>				X	X			X	X			
Connecticut Warbler <i>(Oporornis agilis)</i>						X	X		X			
Mourning Warbler <i>(Oporornis philadelphia)</i>						X	X		X			
Northern Parula <i>(Parula americana)</i>						X	X		X			
Prothonotary Warbler <i>(Protonotaria citrea)</i>						X	X					
Ovenbird <i>(Seiurus aurocapillus)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Louisiana Waterthrush <i>(Seiurus motacilla)</i>						X	X					
Northern Waterthrush <i>(Seiurus noveboracensis)</i>				X	X				X			
American Redstart <i>(Setophaga ruticilla)</i>						X	X	X	X	X		
Orange-crowned Warbler <i>(Vermivora celata)</i>							X			X		
Golden-winged Warbler <i>(Vermivora chrysoptera)</i>							X	X		X		
Tennessee Warbler <i>(Vermivora peregrina)</i>							X			X		
Blue-winged Warbler <i>(Vermivora pinus)</i>							X	X				
Nashville Warbler <i>(Vermivora ruficapilla)</i>							X		X	X		
Canada Warbler <i>(Wilsonia canadensis)</i>							X	X	X	X		
Wilson's Warbler <i>(Wilsonia pusilla)</i>							X		X			
<hr/>												
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▶ TANAGERS												
Scarlet Tanager <i>(Piranga olivacea)</i>							X	X	X	X	X	
Summer Tanager <i>(Piranga rubra)</i>							X					



SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
EMBERIZIDS												
Lapland Longspur <i>(Calcarius lapponicus)</i>												
Dark-eyed Junco <i>(Junco hyemalis)</i>												
Swamp Sparrow <i>(Melospiza georgiana)</i>												
Lincoln's Sparrow <i>(Melospiza lincolni)</i>												
Song Sparrow <i>(Melospiza melodia)</i>												
Savannah Sparrow <i>(Passerculus sandwichensis)</i>												
Fox Sparrow <i>(Passerella iliaca)</i>												
Eastern Towhee <i>(Pipilo erythrophthalmus)</i>												
Snow Bunting <i>(Plectrophenax nivalis)</i>												
Vesper Sparrow <i>(Poocetes gramineus)</i>												
American Tree Sparrow <i>(Spizella arborea)</i>												
Clay-colored Sparrow <i>(Spizella pallida)</i>												
Chipping Sparrow <i>(Spizella passerina)</i>												
Field Sparrow <i>(Spizella pusilla)</i>												
White-throated Sparrow <i>(Zonotrichia albicollis)</i>												
White-crowned Sparrow <i>(Zonotrichia leucophrys)</i>												
Harris's Sparrow <i>(Zonotrichia querula)</i>												

SPECIES	SEASONAL OCCURRENCE											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
▶ OLD WORLD SPARROWS												
House Sparrow <i>(Passer domesticus)</i>												
INT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OTHER BIRDS												

Accessing Pheasant Branch Conservancy

From Highway 12:

Take Highway 12 to the city of Middleton. Turn east on Century Avenue (County Hwy M). Take Century Avenue to Pheasant Branch Road, then turn north (left) on Pheasant Branch Road.

From the City of Madison:

Take University Avenue west to Middleton. Turn north (right) on Allen Boulevard. Take Allen Boulevard to Century Avenue. Turn west (left) on Century Avenue. Take Century Avenue to Pheasant Branch Road, then turn north (right) on Pheasant Branch Road.

City and county parking lots are located on the east side of Pheasant Branch Road. The city parking lot is 0.6 miles north of Century Avenue. The county parking lot is 1.2 miles north of Century Avenue. A pedestrian trail leads from the parking lot at the park in Middleton's Orchid Heights neighborhood into the county property. The city of Middleton maintains pedestrian entrances on Century Avenue near Branch Street. From the Century Avenue entrances, birders can access hiking trails into the marsh or along the South Branch of Pheasant Branch Creek.

Conservancy hours are 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.



Birding Etiquette

Protect the welfare of birds and other wildlife:

- Observe and photograph birds without disturbing them or their habitats.
- Avoid chasing or repeatedly “flushing” birds. Startled birds may waste energy searching for a new “safe” area.
- Limit the use of sound recordings and similar methods of attracting birds.
- Keep an appropriate distance from nests and nesting cavities.
- Do not handle birds, eggs, or nests. Do not “save” baby birds. Mother birds are usually nearby, watching from a safe distance.

Protect Pheasant Branch Conservancy:

- Stay on existing trails and pathways to avoid disturbing fragile habitats.
- Walk carefully to avoid trampling plants that might be food sources or cover for the birds.
- Take only photographs. Leave only footprints. Pick up litter and carry out trash.

Respect the rights of others:

- Observe all laws, rules, and regulations, especially those posted on conservancy signs.
- Be considerate of others visiting the conservancy.
- Unleashed or barking dogs can disturb birds, other wildlife, and other conservancy visitors.

Learning More

The Geology, Cultural History, and Ecology of the Pheasant Branch Watershed and Pheasant Branch Conservancy of Middleton, Wisconsin by the Friends of Pheasant Branch, Inc., Middleton (2003). Available on the worldwide web at: www.pheasantbranch.org.

Wisconsin Birdlife: Populations and Distribution, Past and Present by S.D. Robbins. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison (1991). 702 pp.

Wisconsin Birds: A Seasonal and Geographical Guide. 2nd. ed. by S.A. Temple, J.R. Cary, and R. Rolley. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison (1997). 320 pp.

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology web site: wso.uwgb.edu/wisclist.htm.

“BirdSource” web site: www.birdsource.org.

Checklists of Wisconsin Vertebrates by D.J. Watermolen and M.D. Murrell. Bureau of Integrated Science Services, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison (2001). 50 pp.



Notes and Sketches 





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About the Authors

Dreux Watermolen is an ecologist and Chief of Science Information Services for the Wisconsin DNR. He has lived adjacent Pheasant Branch Conservancy for the past 10 years.

Mike McDowell is an avid birder and wildlife photographer who has frequented Pheasant Branch Conservancy over the past 10 years. His photographs have appeared in numerous national publications.

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Production

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